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VOL. XXV. ELIZABETH CITY, N. C., FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 1897. NO 33.

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A PLEA FOR COURAGE.

REV. DR. TALMAGE ON RUIN AND RESTORATION.

There Must Be Exploration Before Reconstruction—Instances of the Triumph of Sadness—Words of Hope and Cheer For the Discouraged.

WASHINGTON, April 4.—From the weird and midnight experiences of one of ancient times Dr. Talmage in his sermon draws lessons startlingly appropriate. His text was Nehemiah ii, 15, "Then went I up in the night by the brook and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned."

A dead city is more suggestive than a living city—past Rome than present Rome—ruins rather than newly frescoed cathedral. But the best time to visit a ruin is by moonlight. The Coliseum is far more fascinating to the traveler after sundown than before. You may stand by daylight amid the monastic ruins of Melrose abbey, and study shafted oriel and rosetted stone and mullion, but they throw their strongest witchery by moonlight. Some of you remember what the enchanter of Scotland said in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel:"

Wouldst thou view fair Melrose aright?
Go visit it by the pale moonlight.

Jerusalem In Ruins.

Washington Irving describes the Andalusian moonlight upon the Alhambra ruins as amounting to an enchantment. My text presents you Jerusalem in ruins. The tower down. The gates down. The walls down. Everything down. Nehemiah on horseback, by moonlight looking upon the ruins. While he rides there are some friends on foot going with him, for they do not want the many horses to disturb the suspicions of the people. These people do not know the secret of Nehemiah's heart, but they are going as a sort of bodyguard.

I hear the clicking hoofs of the horse on which Nehemiah rides, as he guides it this way and that, into this gate and out of that, winding through that gate amid the debris of once great Jerusalem. Now the horse comes to dead halt at the tumbled masonry where he cannot pass. Now he shies off at the charred timbers. Now he comes along where the water under the moonlight flashes from the mouth of the brazen dragon after which the gate was named. Heavy hearted Nehemiah, riding in and out, now by his old home desolated, now by the defaced temple, now amid the scars of the city that had gone down under battering ram and conflagration! The escorting party knows not what Nehemiah means. Is he getting crazy? Have his own personal sorrows, added to the sorrows of the nation, unbalanced his intellect? Still the midnight exploration goes on. Nehemiah on horseback rides through the fish gate, by the tower of the furnaces, by the king's pool, by the dragon well, in and out, in and out, until the midnight ride is completed, and Nehemiah dismounts from his horse, and to the amazed and confounded and incredulous bodyguard, declares the dead secret of his heart when he says, "Come, now, let us build Jerusalem." "What, Nehemiah, have you any money?" "No." "Have you any kingly authority?" "No." "Have you any eloquence?" "No." Yet that midnight, moonlight ride of Nehemiah resulted in the glorious rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. The people knew not how the thing was to be done, but with great enthusiasm they cried out, "Let us rise up now and build the city." Some people laughed and said it could not be done. Some people were infuriate and offered physical violence, saying the thing should not be done. But the workmen went right on, standing on the wall, trowel in one hand, sword in the other, until the work was gloriously completed. At that very time in Greece, Xenophon was writing a history, and Plato was making philosophy, and Demosthenes was rattling his rhetorical thunder. But all of them together did not do so much for the world as this midnight, moonlight ride of praying, courageous, homesick, close mouthed Nehemiah.

Church Affection.

My subject first impresses me with the idea what an intense thing is church affection. Seize the bridle of that horse and stop, Nehemiah. Why are you risking your life here in the night? Your horse will stumble over these ruins and fall on you. Stop this useless exposure of your life. No; Nehemiah will not stop. He at last tells us the whole story. He lets us know he was an exile in a far distant land, and he was a servant, a cupbearer in the palace of Artaxerxes Lonigmanus, and one day, while he was handing the cup of wine to the king, the king said to him: "What is the matter with you? You are not sick. I know you must have some great trouble. What is the matter with you?" Then he told the king how that beloved Jerusalem was broken down, how that his father's tomb had been desecrated, how that the temple had been dishonored and defaced, how that the walls were scattered and broken. "Well," says King Artaxerxes, "what do you want?" "Well," said the cupbearer, Nehemiah, "I want to go home. I want to fix up the grave of my father. I want to restore the beauty of the temple. I want to rebuild the masonry of the city wall. Besides, I want passports so that I shall not be hindered in my journey, and besides that," as you will find in the context, "I want an order on the man who keeps your forest for just so much timber as I may need for the rebuilding of the city." "How long shall you be gone?" said the king. The time of absence is arranged. In hot haste this seeming adventurer comes to Jerusalem, and in my text we find him on horseback, in the midnight, riding around the ruins. It is through the spectacles of this scene that we discover the ardent attachment of Nehemiah for sacred Jerusalem, which in all ages has been the type of the church of God, our Jerusalem, which we love just as much as Nehemiah loved his Jeursalem. The fact is that you love the church of God so much that there is no spot on earth so sacred unless it be your own fireside. The church has been to you so much comfort and illumination that there is nothing that makes you so irate as to have it talked against.

If there have been times when you have been carried into captivity by sickness, you longed for the church, our holy Jerusalem, just as much as Nehemiah longed for his Jerusalem, and the first day you came out you came to the house of the Lord. When the temple was in ruins, like Nehemiah, you walked around and looked at it, and in the moonlight you stood listening if you could not hear the voice of the dead organ, the psalm of the expired Sabbaths. What Jerusalem was to Nehemiah the church of God is to you. Skeptics and infidels may scoff at the church as an obselete affair, as a relic of the dark ages, as a convention of goody goody people, but all the impression they have ever made on your mind against the church of God is absolutely nothing. You would make more sacrifices for it today than any other institution, and if it were needful you would die in its defense. You can take the words of the kingly poet as he said, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." You understand in your own experience the pathos, the homesickness, the courage, the holy enthusiasm of Nehemiah in his midnight moonlight ride around the ruins of his beloved Jerusalem.

Exploration.

Again, my text impresses me with the fact that, before reconstruction, there must be an exploration of ruins. Why was not Nehemiah asleep under the covers? Why was not his horse stabled in the midnight? Let the police of the city arrest this midnight rider, out on some mischief. No. Nehemiah is going to rebuild the city, and he is making the preliminary exploration. In this gate, out that gate, east, west, north, south. All through the ruins. The ruins must be explored before the work of reconstruction can begin.

The reason that so many people in this day apparently converted do not stay converted is because they did not first explore the ruins of their own heart. The reason that there are so many professed Christians who in this day lie and forge and steal and commit abominations and go to the penitentiary is because they first do not learn the ruin of their own heart. They have not found out that "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." They had an idea that they were almost right, and they built religion as a sort of extension, as an ornamental cupola. There was a superstructure of religion built on a substratum of unrepented sins. The trouble with a good deal of modern theology is that instead of building on the right foundation it builds on the debris of an unregenerated nature. They attempt to rebuild Jerusalem before, in the midnight of conviction, they have seen the ghastliness of the ruin. They have such a poor foundation for their religion that the first northeast storm of temptation blows them down. I have no faith in a man's conversion if he is not converted in the old fashioned way—John Bunyan's way, John Wesley's way, John Calvin's way, Paul's way, Christ's way, God's way. A dentist said to me, "Does that hurt?" Said I: "Of course it hurts. It is in your business as in my profession. We have to hurt before we can help." You will never understand redemption until you understand ruin. A man tells me that some one is a member of the church. It makes no impression on my mind at all. I simply want to know whether he was converted in the old fashioned way or whether he was converted in the new fashioned way. If he was converted in the old fashioned way, he will stand. If he was converted in the new fashioned way, he will not stand. That is all there is about it.

A man comes to me to talk about religion. The first question I ask him is, "Do you feel yourself to be a sinner?" If he says, "Well, I—yes," the hesitancy makes me feel that that man wants a ride on Nehemiah's horse by midnight through the ruins—in by the gate of his affections, out by the gate of his will—and before he has got through with that midnight ride he will drop the reins on the horse's neck and will take his right hand and smite on his heart and say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," and before he has stabled his horse he will take his feet out of the stirrups, and he will slide down on the ground, and he will kneel, crying: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy loving kindness, according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies! Blot out my transgressions, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sins are ever before thee." Ah, my friends, you see this is not a complimentary gospel. That is what makes some people so mad. It comes to a man of $1,000,000 and impenitent in his sins and says, "You're a pauper." It comes to a woman of fairest cheek who has never repented and says, "You're a sinner." It comes to a man priding himself on his independence and says, "You're bound hand and foot by the devil." It comes to our entire race and says, "You're a ruin, a ghastly ruin, an illimitable ruin." Satan sometimes says to me: "Why do you preach that truth? Why don't you preach a gospel with no repentance in it? Why don't you flatter men's hearts so that you make them feel all right? Why don't you preach a humanitarian gospel, with no repentance in it, saying nothing about the ruin, talking all the time about the redemption?" I say, "Get thee behind me, satan." I would rather lead five souls into safety than 20,000 into perdition. The redemption of the gospel is a perfect farce if there is no ruin. "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." "If any one, though he be an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than this," says the apostle, "let him be accursed." There must be the midnight ride over the ruins before Jerusalem can be built. There must be the clicking of the hoofs before there can be the ring of the trowels.

Triumphant Sadness.

Again, my subject gives me a specimen of busy and triumphant sadness. If there was any man in the world who had a right to mope and give up everything as lost, it was Nehemiah. You say, "He was a cupbearer in the palace of Shushan, and it was a grand place." So it was. The hall of that palace was 200 feet square, and the roof hovered over 36 marble pillars, each pillar 60 feet high, and the intense blue of the sky and the deep green of the forest foliage, and the white of the driven snow, all hung trembling in the upholstery. But, my friends, you know very well that fine architecture will not put down homesickness. Yet Nehemiah did not give up. Then, when you see him going among these desolated streets and by these dismantled towers and by the torn up grave of his father, you would suppose that he would have been disheartened and that he would have dismounted from his horse and gone to his room and said: "Woe is me! My father's grave is torn up. The temple is dishonored. The walls are broken down. I have no money with which to rebuild. I wish I had never been born. I wish I were dead." Not so says Nehemiah. Although he had a grief so intense that it excited the commentary of his king, yet that penniless, expatriated Nehemiah rouses himself up to rebuild the city. He gets his permission of absence. He gets his passports. He hastens away to Jerusalem. By night on horseback he rides through the ruins. He overcomes the most ferocious opposition. He arouses the piety and patriotism of the people, and in less than two months—namely, 52 days—Jerusalem was rebuilt. That's what I call busy and triumphant sadness.

Faint, Yet Pursuing.

My friends, the whole temptation is with you when you have trouble to do just the opposite to the behavior of Nehemiah, and that is to give up. You say, "I have lost my child and can never smile again." You say, "I have lost my property, and I never can repair my fortunes." You say, "I have fallen into sin, and I never can start again for a new life." If satan can make you form that resolution and make you keep it, he has ruined you. Trouble is not sent to crush you, but to arouse you, to animate you, to propel you. The blacksmith does not thrust the iron into the forge and then blow away with the bellows and then bring the hot iron out on the anvil and beat with stroke after stroke to ruin the iron, but to prepare it for a better use. Oh, that the Lord God of Nehemiah would rouse up all broken hearted people to rebuild! Whipped, betrayed, shipwrecked, imprisoned, Paul went right on. The Italian martyr Algerius sits in his dungeon writing a letter, and he dates it, "From the delectable orchard of the Leonine prison." That is what I call triumphant sadness. I knew a mother who buried her babe on Friday and on Sabbath appeared in the house of God and said: "Give me a class; give me a Sabbath school class. I have no child now left me, and I would like to have a class of little children. Give me real poor children. Give me a class off the back street." That, I say, is beautiful. That is triumphant sadness.

At 3 o'clock every Sabbath afternoon, for years, in a beautiful parlor in Philadelphia—a parlor pictured and statuetted—there were from 10 to 20 destitute children of the street. Those destitute children received religious instruction, concluding with cakes and sandwiches. How do I know that that was going on for 16 years? I know it in this way: That was the first home in Philadelphia where I was called to comfort a great sorrow. They had a splendid boy, and he had been drowned at Long Branch. The father and mother almost idolized the boy, and the sob and shriek of that father and mother as they hung over the coffin resound in my ears today. There seemed to be no use of praying, for when I knelt down to pray the outcry in the room drowned out all the prayer. But the Lord comforted that sorrow. They did not forget their trouble. If you should go any afternoon into Laurel Hill, you would find a monument with the word "Walter" inscribed upon it and a wreath of fresh flowers around the name. I think there was not an hour in 20 years, winter or summer, when there was not a wreath of fresh flowers around Walter's name. But the Christian mother who sent those flowers there, having no child left, Sabbath afternoons mothered 10 or 20 of the lost ones of the street. That is beautiful. That is what I call busy and triumphant sadness. Here is a man who has lost his property. He does not go to hard drinking. He does not destroy his own life. He comes and says: "Harness me for Christian work. My money's gone. I have no treasures on earth. I want treasures in heaven. I have a voice and a heart to serve God." You say that that man has failed. He has not failed—he has triumphed!

Never Give Up.

Oh, I wish I could persuade all the people who have any kind of trouble never to give up. I wish they would look at the midnight rider of the text and that the four hoofs of that beast on which Nehemiah rode might cut to pieces all your discouragements and hardships and trials. Give up! Who is going to give up when on the bosom of God he can have all his troubles hushed? Give up! Never think of giving up. Are you borne down with poverty? A little child was found holding her dead mother's hand in the darkness of a tenement house, and some one coming in the little girl looked up, while holding her dead mother's hand, and said, "Oh, I do wish that God had made more light for poor folks." My dear, God will be your light, God will be your shelter, God will be your home. Are you borne down with the bereavements of life? Is the house lonely now that the child is gone? Do not give up. Think of what the old sexton said when the minister asked him why he put so much care on the little graves in the cemetery—so much more care than on the larger graves—and the old sexton said, "Sir, you know that 'of such is the kingdom of heaven,' and I think the Saviour is pleased when he sees so much white clover growing around these little graves." But when the minister pressed the old sexton for a more satisfactory answer the old sexton said, "Sir, about these larger graves, I don't know who are the Lord's saints and who are not, but you know, sir, it is clean different with the bairns." Oh, if you have had that keen, tender, indescribable sorrow that comes from the loss of a child, do not give up. The old sexton was right. It is all well with the bairns. Or, if you have sinned, if you have sinned grievously—sinned until you have been cast out by the church, sinned until you have been cast out by society—do not give up. Perhaps there may be in this house one that could truthfully utter the lamentation of another:

Once I was pure as the snow, but I fell—
Fell like a snowflake, from heaven to hell—
Fell to be trampled as filth in the street—
Fell to be scoffed at, spit on and beat,
Praying, cursing, wishing to die,
Selling my soul to whoever would buy,
Dealing in shame for a morsel of bread,
Hating the living and fearing the dead.

Do not give up! One like unto the Son of God comes to you today, saying, "Go and sin no more," while he cries out to your assailants, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone at her." Oh, there is no reason why any one in this house by reason of any trouble or sin should give up. Are you a foreigner, and in a strange land? Nehemiah was an exile. Are you penniless? Nehemiah was poor. Are you homesick? Nehemiah was homesick. Are you broken hearted? Nehemiah was broken hearted. But just see him in the text, riding along the sacrileged grave of his father, and by the dragon well, and through the fish gate, and by the king's pool, in and out, in and out, the moonlight falling on the broken masonry, which throws a long shadow, at which the horse shies, and at the same time that moonlight kindling up the features of this man till you see not only the mark of sad reminiscence, but the courage and hope, the enthusiasm of a man who knows that Jerusalem will be rebuilded. I pick you up today out of your sins and out of your sorrow, and I put you against the warm heart of Christ. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

The Governor's Wonderful Hat.

The governor of Missouri is wearing a most outrageous hat. It was given to him by Adjutant General M. Fred Bell, who has excellent taste in everything except hats. The governor perhaps wouldn't wear it at all if it hadn't been presented to him by so good and loyal a friend as General Bell. If a casual acquaintance had sent it to him, Governor Stephens would doubtless have viewed the gift with suspicion and stored it away from public gaze, and if it had come from a political enemy he certainly would have sent it back by the first train. The hat is of such gigantic proportions that the governor seems to stagger under it as he walks. Its crown is built upon the plans and specifications of a mountain peak, and when it is crushed in the center it has the appearance of an extinct volcano. And yet Governor Stephens seems actually proud of the hat. It probably cost more than any other hat in Missouri, and must have been made to order. Jefferson City is wondering how long the governor is going to wear the hat.—Lebanon (Mo.) Rustic.

Waldenses For Tennessee.

It is expected that 1,000 Waldenses from the Alpine valleys will arrive in Tennessee this spring to join the colony of 350 that established itself near Morganton in 1893. The first colony that came to this country settled in Burke county, N. C., in 1893. Under the leadership of Dr. Teofilo Gai and the Rev. C. A. Tron, the colonists purchased several thousand acres of land and obtained a period of 20 years in which to pay for it. Since then they have succeeded far beyond their expectations and have negotiated for 10,000 acres just across in Tennessee, which will be filled by the newcomers. They have also secured options on many thousands of acres of contiguous mountain lands, which will be purchased in case the immigration warrants it. Valdese is the principal town of the Waldenses in the Tennessee mountains and is ten miles from Morganton.—New York Tribune.

Dublin has sustained a serious loss in the death of a splendid specimen of the Irish wolf dog. Congal was of the purest breed of this almost extinct brand of dog, and, though the slaughter of the last Irish wolf 100 years ago might have been expected to deprive him of his condition and ferocity as of his raison d'etre, he was as fine a beast as any of his more fortunately situated ancestors could have been. It is related that the late Professor Haughton, a constant visitor to the zoo, used to say that if he were walking in the gardens and a keeper told him that the royal Bengal tiger had broken loose he would answer devoutly, "Thank God, it is not the Irish wolf dog."—Westminster Gazette.

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EUROPE'S COLONIES.

Of All the Powers Spain Alone Is Falling Steadily Behind.

The only one of the European countries having colonial possessions which is failing in respect of number, wealth and population is Spain, once the chief colonial power of the European continent. While other governments have been extending their influence and possessions, Spain has been falling in the rear, and the reason for this is seen clearly in Cuba and the Philippines. Wasteful, oppressive, mercenary and inefficient government is the direct cause.

In a census of the colonial possessions of governments made 20 years ago it appeared that the total colonial possessions of Great Britain covered 7,600,000 square miles, or more than 60 times the extent of the United Kingdom, and had a population of about 200,000,000. France had foreign colonies, exclusive of Algeria, covering 460,000 English square miles, with a population of 2,500,000. The colonial possessions of Spain, the remnant of the heritage from Spain's navigators, covered an area of 115,000 English square miles, with a population of 8,500,000. Germany, newly established as a united government, had no foreign colonies. Neither had any of the German states. The colonies of the Netherlands covered 666,000 square miles and had a population of 24,000,000. Belgium had no colonies. Denmark's colonies were chiefly islands, the total population being about 50,000. Norway and Sweden had one small island, and Portugal had colonies covering 713,000 English miles, with a population of 4,000,000. Since that time most European governments have extended their territory.

The British empire now covers 11,000,000 square miles, of which only 120,000 are in the United Kingdom. The population of the English colonies is 340,000,000. The colonies of France cover 2,900,000 square miles and have a population of 21,000,000. The area of the colonies of the Netherlands is 760,000 miles, and the population is 29,000,000. There are nearly 6,000,000 subjects of the German empire in Africa and 8,000,000 of Belgium.

The Russians have spread their colonies until these have in Asia a population in excess of 30,000,000, and, though the population of Portugal is less than 5,000,000, the colonies of Portugal have collectively a population in excess of 6,000,000, the area of Portugal's colonies being 30 times greater than that of the home country. Denmark's colonies have spread, though not much, and Italy has appeared among European nations having colonial possessions. Spain alone has made no headway. There has been no increase of her possessions or of the population of them. Many districts of Cuba and a few of those of the Philippines have been devastated by war, and the commerce of these colonies with the home country has declined appreciably. The Spaniards are in no position to hope for an extension of their colonial possessions. Indeed all present indications point to the ultimate withdrawal of Spain from much territory that she now rules.—New York Sun.

It is a matter for [illegible] that as the years have rolled by [illegible] nual tribute has become more [illegible] tion of peace than of war, more [illegible] antee for the future than a record of the past. The exultation over victory has given place to exultation over increasing good feeling and a restored harmony in all sections. The gray sleeps beside the blue in many a cemetery, but both will have their tribute of flowers from loving hands, typical of mutual regret and admiration for manifest courage.—Chicago Times.

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